THE LIBRARY, ST. CHARLES SEMINARY, CARTHAGENA, OHIO

The Presuppositions of Democracy
—Will Herberg

THE

Commonweal

IS STARVATION INEVITABLE?

by Michael P. Fogarty

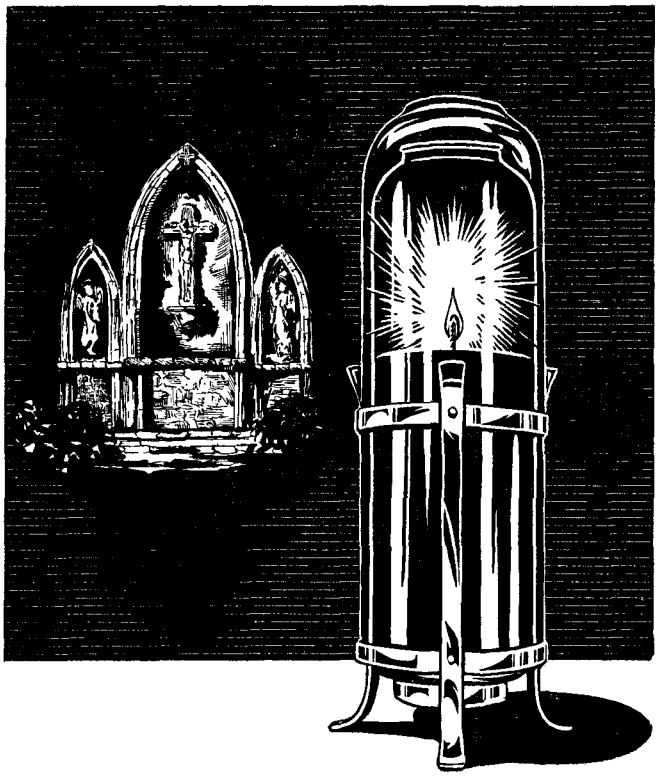
Rose Grieco Richard Hayes

Philip T. Hartung John Cogley James D. Finn

John F. Sullivan John Cournos

olume LXII, No. 9 June 3, 1955 Twenty Cents

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



TOTIS VIRIBUS

Since our founding in 1855, Will & Baumer has worked unceasingly to supply the Church with candles of the highest quality. Every resource at our command—untiring laboratory research, experienced craftsmanship—has been devoted to making a better product . . . suited in every respect to the high purpose for which it is intended.

A recent Will & Baumer improvement is the New Style Sanctolite. A scientifically-designed 7-day Sanctuary Light that burns steadier—and longer—it conforms to the high standard of quality and value inherent in every Will & Baumer product.

Will & Baumer

CANDLE CO., INC.

THE PIONEER CHURCH CANDLE MANUFACTURERS OF AMERICA
IN OUR SECOND CENTURY OF FINE CANDLE MAKING
SYRACUSE BOSTON NEW YORK CHICAGO
MONTREAL LOS ANGELES

PURVEYORS TO THE VATICAN BY APPOINTMENT

THIS WEEK

Week by Week 219

Is Starvation Inevitable?
by Michael P. Fogarty 223

The Sunday Papa Missed Mass
by Rose Grieco 226

The Stage
by Richard Hayes 230

The Screen
by Philip T. Hartung 231

Two Images of One Man
by John Cogley 233

The Presuppositions of Democracy
by Will Herberg 234

Book Reviews 237

THE COMMONWEAL
386 FOURTH AVENUE
NEW YORK 16

Editor
EDWARD S. SKILLIN

Managing Editor
JAMES O'GARA

Associate Editor
WILLIAM P. CLANCY

Contributing Editors
PHILIP BURNHAM
JOHN C. CORT
ANNE FREMANTLE
PHILIP T. HARTUNG
RICHARD HAYES
WILLIAM PFAFF

JOHN BRUBAKER: *Advertising Manager*

Entered as second-class matter at the post office at Orange, Conn., under the act of March 3, 1879. Published weekly, printed and copyrighted 1955, in the U. S. A. by the Commonweal Publishing Co., Inc., 386 Fourth Ave., New York 16, N. Y., MUrray Hill 3-9685.

U. S. and Canada, $7.50 a year. Foreign, $9.50. Single copies 20¢

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The
Commonweal
week by week

Catholics and the Movies

ONCE more we are in the midst of a Catholics-and-the-Movies controversy. Father Thomas F. Little, the executive secretary of the national Legion of Decency, has denounced the large number of "objectionable" films currently being made in Hollywood, and Cardinal McIntyre of Los Angeles has publicly warned against a new "laxity" in motion picture production and advertising. Catholics are obviously distressed over the state of movie morals and are determined to improve them. A renewed "decency" drive has begun.

This drive has already called forth indignant reactions from both Hollywood producers and certain guardians of liberal opinion. Dore Schary, vice-president of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, has complained that "it's a shame that a whole industry should be blasted because of a few pictures" and the New York *Post* sees a threat to America's free traditions in what it regards as the Legion of Decency's attempt to impose its own standards on the nation's entertainment industry.

"There are many things wrong with Hollywood movies," Max Lerner, the *Post* columnist, admits. "But," he adds, "the double attack on them by the Communist publications and the Legion of Decency clerical censors should remind us that both groups would replace what we have with a far more intolerable straitjacket to stifle all creativeness."

The familiar lines are thus drawn. Catholics emerge again as, in their own view, defenders of moral values—and in the view of others intolerable philistines; liberals again stand forth as, in their own view, protectors of freedom and creativity—and in the view of others muddle-headed accomplices in corruption. Eric Johnston, president of the Motion Picture Association of America, has stated that the movie industry does not plan to make "any concessions to anybody or anything," but it will be impossible for Hollywood to ignore the aroused pressure of Catholic opinion: a new examination of movie morals *will* be made; and resentment against Catholic pressure will increase in many quarters to the extent that forthcoming films reflect the Legion's power. It seems time, therefore, to consider the situation in its major implications anew.

THIS magazine would suggest that in dealing with this problem both camps—liberals and Catholics—tend to fall into certain simplistic errors. The error of the liberals seems to us more dangerous for democracy, however, than does the error of the Catholics.

The liberals, for example, in their concern for freedom, frequently forget that the use of pressure is one of freedom's indispensable weapons, and this whether one likes some particular manifestation of pressure or not. Liberals, on the whole, dislike and distrust *religious* pressure (although they are less than frank about admitting this) and so, in opposing it, they trap themselves into denying the legitimacy of pressure at all, and this is an extremely dangerous thing for any liberal—any man who values freedom—to do.

Liberals thus talk about "freedom" as though it existed in some vacuum, cut off from the rough and tumble world of the pressure and politics of men. They fall into a kind of political angelism, being oh-so-pure and oh-so-righteous about liberty, but forgetting that, in the concrete, liberty is exercised through such mundane channels as the number of tickets that some minority may buy for a movie it likes or refuses to buy for a movie it disapproves of.

The freedom of the artist is a noble thing, but so is the freedom of any group to influence, as best it may, the course of public events. In a free society the answer to pressure we don't like is not to denounce its use or its right to exist (as liberals usually do in the case of religious pressure) but to organize counter-pressure. This is how democracy works.

When, we wonder, will liberals see that groups such as the Legion of Decency, whether one likes their point of view or not, are an indispensable part of any free society? When will they cease to be

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

so pure about an abstract theory of freedom that they argue the practical workings of freedom out of existence? They do not want state censorship—and neither do we. Why can they not see that in an imperfect world the only alternative to state censorship is the kind of regulation imposed on public morals by the pressure of private groups? Too many liberals still live in Rousseau's garden; it is time they came out into the real world where things are not so pleasant.

It should be fairly obvious that in this real world, where greed and violence constantly menace society, it is the role of the Church to concern itself, through the action of its members, with keeping greed and violence in check. To hear liberal mutterings about "clerical censorship" whenever it attempts to do so does not increase one's confidence in the profundity of the liberal mind. The legitimacy of such private groups as the Legion of Decency and the need for them within a free society (because it *is* free and uncontrolled) seem unassailable. We wish our liberal friends could see this fact of life.

BUT if the liberals, in attacking the existence of religious pressure groups, fall into a dangerous angelism about democracy, the religious-minded—in this case Catholics—make their mistakes too. Liberals talk as though freedom were somehow separate from its exercise by particular men and groups and in the name of an abstract liberty thus endanger liberty's practical expression; Catholics, on the other hand, too often seem mechanists in their exclusively moral approach to the arts. They, too, tend to abstract a virtue or a vice from its existential expression and are thus left with nothing in the concrete order. If liberals are frequently simplistic about freedom, Catholics are frequently simplistic about art.

The Legion of Decency, for example, operates on the principle of making *only* moral evaluations of movies, leaving to others all consideration of their artistic aspects. This sounds fine; the trouble is, it cannot be done. To know the "theme" of a book or a play is to know nothing. Everything depends on what the artist does with his theme. It makes some difference, after all, whether the theme of incest is treated by Sophocles or by Mickey Spillane. Similarly, to know the "conclusion" of a book or play is to know nothing. Everything depends on the totality of the work. To abstract the theme or the conclusion from this totality and praise or blame it for itself is to praise or blame nothing. Yet this is what the Legion of Decency is too often betrayed into doing by its single-minded attention to morals without art.

It is fitting and proper, certainly, that the Church concern itself with public morals. It is necessary that such an organization as the Legion of Decency exist. But it is unfortunate that Catholics appear always to play the public role of philistine—and this they must do for as long as they adopt a narrowly and exclusively moralistic approach to the arts. That they often adopt such an approach, and seem everywhere to urge it, is especially sad, because the Catholic tradition is not a puritanical one. The Church is the mother of the arts, not their policeman.

"Many prudent men quarrel with art, however good, because many prudent men are prudes," Eric Gill once wrote. And this quarrel, he said, "can never be settled until most men of prudence are also artists, and most artists are men of prudence." This pleasing state of affairs will, alas, never come about, so we will probably always have our frequent wars between the camps of art and prudence. But the task of Catholics should be to resolve such wars, not to instigate or prolong them. And this can be done only by careful attention to the legitimate claims of both art and prudence and not by exclusive alignment with either.

That we have, in the past, seemed to make exclusive alignment with a too narrow moralism has not served our cause well. The Legion of Decency must continue to concern itself with morality but it is to be hoped that it will do so in ever widening, ever more catholic terms, remembering always the primary fact that, in any given work, no real divorce between art and morality can be made without rendering the whole creation meaningless.

NEXT WEEK

GUNNAR D. KUMLIEN tells how Tito's Yugoslavia has been gradually returning to the Eastern bloc.

"The imprisoned Moscow Communists, some thirteen thousand in number, are practically all released—not only released but in most cases in the same or similar leading positions as before. They no longer live in constant fear of being arrested but seem to enjoy the highest consideration. . . . There are no anti-aircraft guns around Tito's residence any more; he travels about more than ever, and the measures for his security are no more extensive than they were before his break with Moscow. . . . It is increasingly clear that the Balkan Pact, intended to be a cornerstone in the defense of the West and an alliance of the three best armies in the Eastern Mediterranean, exists for all practical purposes only on paper."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

MUTUAL ROLLBACK?

THE Soviet Union appears to be pushing an idea prominent in its designs some ten years back. At the time there was something persuasive about the Russian object of a buffer zone of neutral States with "friendly" governments on its western borders. Russia had been savagely invaded by Nazi Germany. Large areas had been laid waste; millions of soldiers and civilians had been killed. The invader had finally been driven out only by desperate Russian resistance (and the advance of the Allies in the West). The scheme sounded fairly reasonable, but before long it was perceived how "friendly" those governments had to be.

The neutral belt the Soviet leaders are now after would be considerably broader. It would include Germany itself. No doubt these neutralized nations would, at least at first, enjoy more autonomy than those which fell under the knout during the past decade. But regardless of the extent of the buffer region's autonomy, such a scheme would jettison the whole defense plan of the West.

According to the latest Russian proposals—involving the neutralization scheme—the West would have to withdraw from the advanced air bases which have served as such an effective deterrent until now; the newly completed NATO structure would collapse; armed forces would be reduced or held down, much to the USSR's comparative advantage.

What, then, is to be gained by falling in with this Kremlin scheme? It will doubtless be seized on by perennial optimists together with the Austrian treaty, the revised Soviet disarmament proposals and the generally more conciliatory tone of Moscow and Peiping, as indicative that the policy of relentless expansion has been abandoned.

That is to be devoutly hoped but the signs continue to point in a counter direction. Communist parties, directed from Moscow, continue to agitate, plot and wait their chance in all sectors of the globe. The somewhat alarming development of the offensive arm of the Soviet air force, Communist sabotage of the recent UN Disarmament Conference and certain crippling provisions of the proposed Soviet disarmament terms themselves supply proof enough. The efforts of the reigning Soviet junta to relax international tensions, for whatever domestic reasons, are actually means of moving ahead in their plans for wider and wider domination.

This is the context in which top level talks will have to be worked out. The United States cannot afford to keep its powder dry in such a manner that a failure of these parleys to produce anything substantial can be laid at our door. The stalemate resulting from the conjunction of advanced Western air bases and greatly superior Russian ground forces is infinitely preferable to a retreat. The painfully built up NATO defense system, the foundations of which are just completed, can hardly be abandoned without overwhelmingly compelling reasons. With all the bitter experiences of the past ten years to go on, it is unlikely that American negotiators will be misled.

Perhaps the real problem for our negotiators is that of tact. For all their deviousness the Soviets have made considerable progress toward a gradual disarmament plan that would contain the necessary safeguards. They are, if temporarily, adopting a more conciliatory tone; travel in the Soviet Union and on the part of certain Soviet citizens is beginning to open up. The task is therefore to encourage every sign of conciliation without at any point weakening the common defenses of the West.

LOYALTY OATHS

IN theory, at least, we should all sleep easier in our beds tonight. The battle of the loyalty oaths is proceeding apace. In New York, housing officials are busy collecting oaths from thirty thousand adults living in twenty-eight developments. This action is in conformity with what is called the Gwinn amendment to Federal housing law, which provides that each tenant in a housing project must take an oath that he does not belong to any of the more than two hundred organizations named as subversive on the Attorney-General's list. Failure to sign means eviction. Accompanying the loyalty oath is a warning that any tenant who answers falsely is liable to criminal prosecution for perjury, with penalties upon conviction of five years in jail and a $10,000 fine.

New York is a little late in getting started on this action. The Gwinn amendment was passed in 1952, but compliance was held up in New York by a court ruling that the measure deprived tenants of due process of law. This judicial opinion was later overturned by the Appellate Division, however, which held that "in the present-day context of world crisis after world crisis, it is our opinion that the danger Congress is seeking to avoid, i.e., infiltration of Government housing by subversive elements, justifies the requirement. . . ."

This judicial decision conjures up dramatic images; indeed, the phrase, "the infiltration of government housing by subversive elements" has a fine, almost military ring to it. But exactly what are subversives supposed to subvert in housing projects? Have housing projects taken on the character of military installations? In the weeks

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ahead there will inevitably be, we suppose, some tenants in these projects who will be unwilling or unable to sign such oaths. If they are evicted and sent back to the slums, is this supposed to cure them of any "subversive tendencies"?

The supporters of the Gwinn amendment may think they have struck a blow for freedom and national security. We do not. Security regulations make sense only when national security is actually involved. The very existence of an official list of forbidden organizations should be a painful necessity at best, accepted in view of the world situation, perhaps, but reluctantly. When security precautions are appealed to for petty reasons and obscure purposes, as in this instance, what is involved is an abuse of the whole idea of security. For our part, we feel less, not more, secure as a result of procedures like this, and so should all Americans, we believe. Our great political strength lies in the idea of freedom which America embodies. Now another practice which is repugnant to the American tradition has behind it the force of law and the dignity of the courts. We see no cause for rejoicing here.

"PARTNERSHIP"

THE drive to "get the Government out of business" continues. As a slogan, it certainly has an emotional appeal for Americans. But there are cases and cases, and rarely can such a blanket rule be applied to all examples of government intervention in economic life. The Rural Electrification Administration, which recently celebrated its twentieth anniversary, is a case in point.

Though this is a fact some of its critics find it convenient to overlook, the REA was founded to meet a real need. In 1935, only about eleven per cent of the nation's farms had electrical service. President Roosevelt initiated the REA because farmers complained that private power companies limited their services to concentrated rural areas, where population density made the commercial possibilities more appealing. The work of the REA was simple enough. It encouraged farmers to form co-operatives where they did not already exist. Then it loaned money for such co-ops to build power systems and erect distribution lines.

Over the years, the REA has been on the receiving end of bitter criticism from the private utilities. But there seems to be no doubt that its activities did in fact stimulate these private companies to greater efforts in rural areas. Today all but five per cent of the nation's farms have electricity—an accomplishment which changed the face of America. Systems financed by the REA are now supplying more than half of the rural users of electricity. And the REA has three major objectives for the future: to expand present power facilities in order to meet the increasing farm demand for electricity; to plan and be ready for the day when nuclear energy can mean cheaper electric power for farmers; and to help spread telephone service to rural residents who do not have it.

In any discussion of the role of government in business, accomplishments and goals such as those of the REA have to be taken into account. On such questions, this Administration is identified with what is called a "partnership" approach by government and business. As a basic concept this may be all right, but we do not think much of a partnership in which the government takes all the risks and private firms later reap the major benefits.

A CRUSADE AGAINST POVERTY

ONE of the most stimulating ideas presented by Abbé Pierre in the course of his American visit was addressed to the "haves" rather than the "have-nots." It was the concept of voluntary civilian service. Since he believes that the problem of poverty can be overcome only by love in the full Christian sense, the abbé of the homeless of Paris spoke of the need for volunteers—especially young people— to join communities such as his at Emmaus either permanently or for a specific period. These volunteers would come "with empty hands" to earn their own way and "share the condition of those who suffer." Each volunteer would serve without salary and accept whatever community assignment given. He would be in a somewhat similar status to that of a soldier in his country's armed forces or a member of a monastic community—not to mention Quaker volunteers, Catholic Worker and Friendship Houses. Abbé Pierre recommends "an immediate personal knowledge of human suffering" on the part of those hitherto shielded by good material circumstances. Voluntary civil service of this sort can serve as a powerful attraction for young people desirous of building for a better future in the world.

William Pfaff, since 1949 one of the editors of The Commonweal, recently left New York for the Belgian Congo with several other American journalists for King Baudouin's state visit to that vast Belgian domain. After an extensive visit there Mr. Pfaff will embark on a tour of Europe and the Middle East. In coming weeks The Commonweal will publish articles by him directly from the scene.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Is Starvation Inevitable?

"TWO-THIRDS OF THE PEOPLE OF THE WORLD LIVE IN AREAS WHERE MALNOURISHMENT IS NORMAL AND STARVATION BY NO MEANS UNKNOWN"

MICHAEL P. FOGARTY

WHEN is a hungry man not hungry? When he is only undernourished, says M. K. Bennett of the Food Research Institute at Stanford. We give him his point. Actual empty bellies, as apart from diet deficiencies, are rarer than some of the early, pessimistic, reports suggested. But the fact remains that two-thirds of the people of the world live in underdeveloped territories where malnourishment is normal and actual starvation by no means unknown. And with twenty or thirty million people added to the world's population each year, the problem of catching up on the deficiency is formidable.

The land to grow the food is there, if we choose to use it. There are still big possibilities of improving farm yields even in an advanced territory like Europe. Southern Europe, from Spain across to Turkey, has thirty-nine per cent of Europe's cultivable land but only twenty-six per cent of its agricultural output. There are still more dramatic possibilities in Asia and Africa. Mau Mau has already provided the stimulus for a real agricultural revolution in Kenya. And there are big reserves of uncultivated land. Probably not more than one-fifth of the world's cultivable surface is under cultivation. The best reserves are in Indonesia, Africa, Madagascar, the USSR, and perhaps Canada. If even one-tenth of the apparent reserves could be brought into cultivation, it would be enough—along with the possible increase from existing land—to provide an adequate diet for the existing world population and for most—maybe all—of the next century's increase. There are also other sources of food which might be developed, particularly the sea. To double existing output of sea foods is perfectly practicable, and in principle we ought to be able to do even better than that.

It seems likely however, that food supplies can be expanded to keep pace with population only if population-growth follows its "normal" curve. In primitive societies a woman may perhaps give birth to five to seven children on the average. But, due to high infant and general death rates, few survive, and the population does not grow. Then, in the stage of "early industrialization," comes medical science, and brings death rates down. Birth rates remain high, and the population increases very fast: it may double, or more than double, in a generation. Many underdeveloped countries are in or reaching that stage now. But then, in the "advanced" or "mature" industrial stage, birth rates drop in line with death rates. It is simple arithmetic: if infant mortality drops from three hundred to thirty, fewer births are needed to keep the population up, or to keep each family at what from the point of view of children's development is a satisfactory size.

It is doubtful, to say the least, whether world food supplies could, no matter how great the effort, be expanded fast enough to cope with a permanent growth in world population at "early industrial" rates, which could mean doubling the population every generation. If so, the drop in birth rates to match dropping death rates, which does in fact occur in "advanced industrial" countries, is justified. Birth rates in these countries may indeed come down further than the drop in death rates would justify. That is an abuse. It must be combated. But it must also not be allowed to obscure the reasons which make *some* drop necessary.

THERE is, however, a price to be paid for this. A cash price, first of all. Remember only the overall figure for all types of development given three years ago by a UN commission: that $13 billion a year needs to be poured into the underdeveloped countries from outside to achieve a two per cent annual increase in income per head. To this must be added all the savings they themselves can raise from their own exiguous resources. And money is the smallest part of the price, and the easiest to pay. If Britain were exporting today as much capital, in proportion to its national income, as in 1914, then Britain alone would be putting $3 billion a year into the pool. One cannot expect socialists (or even social-Conservatives)

Mr. Fogarty, formerly an assistant editor of *The Economist* and for many years associated with the Catholic Social Guild, is The Commonweal's correspondent in Britain.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to invest their money for the benefit of the poor as freely as old-time capitalists. But there are other countries in Europe besides Britain: and there is the United States. We could find the money easily enough if we wanted to.

But then there is the other part of the price to be paid. Before aid to the underdeveloped countries on the scale needed can be absorbed, at least to any good purpose, there needs to be a political and economic and above all a social and moral revolution in the receiving countries. It is a question of new personality types, of breaking up family and tribal and caste systems; often also of introducing a money economy, new patterns of consumption and property, and new standards of political life. And this revolution cannot be rushed. It needs to be spread out over a long and difficult period of transition.

For us in Britain, the dangers of rushing an economic transition are summed up in the word "groundnuts." That was a disaster of socialized enterprise, but private enterprise can do it as well. About the first

fact I remember learning in economics was that in 1914 Britain held some four billion pounds worth of overseas investments, which were the remains of about seven billion pounds originally invested. The balance was sunk in the swamps and deserts of Australia or gone with the winds of incompetence and corruption in Latin America.

In any case it is not the economic dangers that are greatest. In Africa hasty mechanization and industrialization have torn social life to pieces. In the USSR or in China economic and social revolution are being driven through at high speed, but at the price of tyranny as well as of colossal economic sacrifices and mistakes. Wages for industrial workers in the USSR are quite probably still below the real level of 1913 or 1928. We used to hear a lot about the burning of coffee and the slaughtering of hogs by the wicked capitalists in the thirties. But no capitalist country achieved such a slaughter as occurred in the same years in the drive for collectivization in the USSR: and the USSR's standard of life has not recovered from that catastrophe yet.

In practice, what usually makes this "early industrial" period even more difficult is that it coincides with the peak period of very rapid population growth. If the population curve could be smoothed, and birth rates brought down parallel with death rates, the strain would be very much less: but that is not what has usually happened up to now.

IN the face of all this, what are we as Christians to recommend? Our standard of judgment is, as in all matters of social action, the growth of human personality. What sort of personalities do we want? Dependent, scared, inclined to avoid difficulties rather than face up to them? Or dynamic, mature, ready to break through whatever obstacles stand in the way of human advance—of fulfilling the command to "fill the earth and make it yours?" The question answers itself. Our first reaction to the problem of world population and resources must be to break the barriers to the expansion of the human race, and to do this not by paternalism and protection but in a way which helps the personalities of all concerned to grow.

First of all, we in the more advanced countries must be prepared to find the cash. We shall not die of it, any more than my parents' and grandparents' generation died of finding the sums—proportionately no greater—which laid the foundations of a modern economy in Australia or India or the Argentine. And we have a right to ask in return for reasonable cooperation from the receiving countries: cooperation in giving fair conditions to investing and a fair deal to the technicians and administration needed to start investment on its way.

Secondly, and far more important, we are not Santa Claus. Our job is to develop men, and only incidentally to develop land or resources. The essential problem is to transmit not capital but a culture; a culture, it goes without saying, which uses Western experience but is offered to the under-developed countries in a form suiting their own conditions, and for their free acceptance. It is a job for missionaries and basic education teams, for youth leaders and specialists in community projects, before it can become one for business men and banks.

The door for this type of work is wider open than people think: particularly for Catholics, for whom the link between countries exists ready-made. The Catholic Social Guild at Oxford finds that the biggest and fastest-growing market for its literature today lies in the under-developed territories of the Commonwealth. The YCW is pushing ahead steadily in Asia and Africa, and one of its older leaders recently became head of the youth leaders training center sponsored by the World Assembly of Youth in Cey-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

lon. The Christian trade unions are growing fast in Africa, and to a lesser extent also in Asia and Latin America.

At the business level, the right approach is certainly that of technical assistance. The big appropriation for grants and investments can come later, when the foundations have been laid. The first step is to make men ready to use them, through collaboration on an equal footing, and with equal responsibility, between the receiving and the giving end.

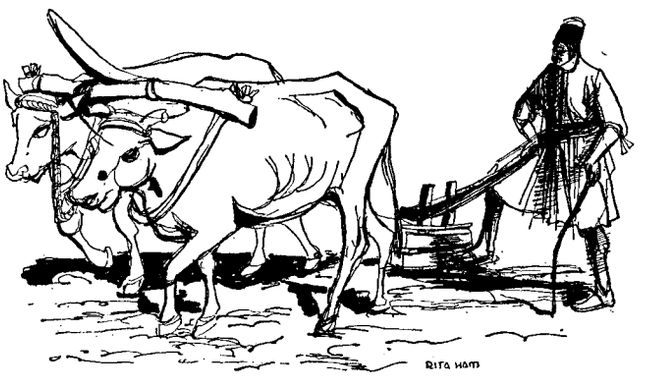
This, obviously, is a point where the Christian and the social scientist can join hands, for they are agreed, if not always on the content of culture, at any rate on the rule that cultural change is basic. An interesting exchange of views on this took place in the *Revue de l'Action Populaire* after last year's World Population Conference at Rome, between Dr. Frank Lorimer, and Father S. de Lestapis, S.J., who was present at the Conference as a Vatican representative. There were substantial points of disagreement. But the exchange also showed how large is the area over which the anthropologist, arguing purely from the natural law, marches together with the Catholic who considers these problems also from the angle of Revelation.

THE positive approach, however, does have its limits. There is no getting away from it; there *are* cases where a certain "regulation of births" (one Pope's phrase, to distinguish it from "birth control") becomes necessary. It *is* desirable to bring birth rates down in line with the fall in death rates between the "primitive" and the "mature industrial" stage. It is probably also desirable to encourage a drop in birth rates, in line with the drop in death rates, in the "early industrial" stage, so as to smooth the curve of population growth and get rid of the bulge which usually complicates the transition from a primitive to an advanced society.

This problem was considered—along with the whole question of population and food resources—in a statement issued last year by the International Union of Social Studies at Malines, under the authority of Cardinal Van Roey. At the World Population Congress Father de Lestapis based on this statement an address which attracted a good deal of attention.

Essentially, the position of the statement is this. Regulation is regrettable but necessary. Let it then at least take a form which builds up and strengthens, rather than undermines, the personality of those responsible for it. First, let parents recognize that in deciding the size of family to aim at, they have a responsibility not only towards their children and each other but also towards the community as a whole. In the words of the International Union of Social Studies' earlier "Family Code," they should allow: "Not merely for the personal welfare of husband and wife—their health and their physical and psychological strength—but also for the welfare of the children and the best possible upbringing for them; for the welfare of the family as a group, with its principles of unity, order, and love; and finally for the general welfare, now and in the future, of the whole community of men in each place and region and in the world as a whole."

But, secondly, this is a responsibility strictly of the parents, for which they answer to each other and to God. Although the State also has a responsibility, it is for research, guidance, and help; the State, in this matter, has no right to decide or compel. And parents for their part are free to exercise their choice only within certain limits. There is a minimum size below which the family group is likely to be too small to be satisfactory for growing children or, often, for their parents. When the British Royal Commission on the Population a few years ago questioned a sample



of married women of forty-five or over on what they thought about the number of children they had had, a very clear pattern emerged. One or two was too few: six or more was normally too many. Three, four, or five seemed about right.

THERE is also a question of methods. The statement proceeds to rank in order the various methods of birth control or regulation, according to the extent to which they do or do not help to build up personal responsibility, and do or do not represent a direct denial of creativity. At the bottom end of the scale, completely ruled out, come mechanical and chemical methods, which require little thought or self-denial, and are a direct denial of the creative purpose of sex. At the top end comes the position of the priest or nun whose vow of celibacy represents dedication to an altogether higher state of life. In between come the rhythm method (looked at a little askance: it does not ask much of those who practice it!) and ordinary celibacy, or abstention from inter-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

course within marriage—lines which obviously call for a high degree of understanding, responsibility, and control.

Understood in this way, "birth regulation" may be necessary, but it is certainly not easy. It calls in fact for as high a degree of cultural development as, for instance, the operation of a modern political system or the ability to make good use of foreign investment. And so, in the end, the dilemma between the birth control and the economic aid approach to the problems of the underdeveloped countries turns out to be a false one. Along both lines there are possibilities of disastrous errors—of economic waste and corruption, of technocracy leading to tyranny, of birth-control campaigns of a type contrary to natural law and directly destructive of human personality. Yet both lines of attack prove to be necessary to meet particular aspects of the problem. What is required is an advance on both fronts, but always remembering that cultural development—the reform of personal and social attitudes and relations—is the necessary foundation of an advance on either.

LEAVING THE CITY

The Sunday Papa Missed Mass

ROSE GRIECO

MY uncles Angelo and Jim came into our family by virtue of having had the good sense to marry my mother's sisters Mary and Lina. I don't mention Uncle John, because although married to Aunt Rose, he always managed to keep a safe distance from our affairs.

With her four daughters married, Nonna turned her thoughts toward keeping them physically close to each other, so that in times of trouble they would not have far to turn. The girls cooperated beautifully by living within one block of each other on the Upper East Side of New York.

However, when children started arriving rather regularly, except in Aunt Rose's case, the women decided that while it meant venturing into new territory, their growing families should be surrounded by space and trees and gardens. Nonna quietly allowed her daughters to convince themselves, because it was they who were going to have to convince their husbands.

The idea of leaving the city was given fresh impetus when a "comare" of ours went to a wake in a place called Montclair in New Jersey, and was charmed by the giant trees and surrounding mountains. Her enthusiasm inspired the women in our family to want to settle there, too.

Aunt Rose, being the oldest, set the migration into motion by explaining to her husband that at the age of twelve their son was totally unfamiliar with fields and gardens. In Montclair, they could plant fig-trees and tomato plants and grape-vines. Now, Uncle John wasn't quite so concerned about fig-trees or tomato plants as he was about his wife's beauty, which caused many men in the crowded neighborhood to cast better than admiring glances in her direction. While pretending to agree for their son's sake, Uncle John was accommodating only because he fervently believed his rose was safer blushing unseen in the country air.

Aunt Mary was next in line, and should have continued the journey into the unknown, but as usual, waited to see what Teresa would do. My mother had little trouble persuading my father. She had always been the quiet one, and when she talked for an hour about how her poor sister Rose must be sick with loneliness out there all by herself, with no one to turn to in times of illness, or listen to her troubles on worrisome days, my father said he would think about it, which meant yes. My mother could have spared herself the trouble of saying her little piece, because my father liked green hills anyway.

When my mother said goodbye to Mary and Lina on the day of departure, they wept as if they would not meet again till the next world. Nonna quietly observed her daughters' luxurious weeping, for she realized that this abundance of sorrow in act one was necessary for the happy ending in act three.

My parents were not long in Montclair when Uncle Angelo was forced to listen to Aunt Mary's litany of loneliness. He let her talk it out, and when she was talked out she became silent and sad; and when Aunt Mary was sad, it was the kind of sadness that could not be borne. Uncle Angelo capitulated as he knew he would, because he missed my father.

And that left Lina. Her job was relatively simple because the spade-work had been done, the forest had been cleared. But since she never allowed any drama in life to pass her by, Uncle Jim had to listen

---

Miss Grieco during the past several years has contributed a number of articles on Italian-American life to The Commonweal.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

patiently while she described to him the torment of being torn from the arms of her nearest and dearest. If a husband died, another could be found, but where pray could one get another sister?

It has never been established whether this particular brand of reasoning swayed Uncle Jim, or whether it was the lonesomeness he felt on Sunday afternoons when he thought of his brothers-in-law playing cards, with the gallon of wine always within easy reach.

In any case, the family was soon re-united, as the women knew it would be; for their husbands' thinking was clear and uncomplicated. They knew that happy women breed happy children, the sum of which adds up to a happy man.

THE first spring in their new surroundings arrived, and with it awoke the ancient urge to plant. Once the fig-trees and grape-vines had taken root, the talk turned to the planting of tomatoes. The problem was, where to get the large branches that would hold the heavy flowering plants when they grew ripe.

My father had taken to walking up into the mountains every Sunday morning before Mass. There were thousands of trees up there, heavy with strong branches. He talked over his discovery with Uncles Angelo and Jim. As usual, Uncle John stayed safely away from the fireworks.

The plan was to go up into the mountains early Sunday morning, before anyone was awake, even the police, and provide themselves with the means for starting their tomato gardens. Then my mother asked the unhappy question; was it legal to chop branches from trees that were not on one's property?

Uncle Angelo immediately took the floor. Who, he asked, was responsible for all those magnificent trees flowering on the mountain-top? God, they answered. Were they children of God? Of course, they answered. Was it conceivable that God would deprive His own children of something He so liberally allowed to fill up His mountains? No, they answered, all but my mother, who was finding it difficult to figure out just how God had got Himself involved in this project. The men, however, satisfied now that the Almighty had a personal interest in the success of their venture, blithely made their plans to strip the trees of the Orange Mountains.

THE next Sunday, long before dawn, armed with axes and a gallon of wine, the gentlemen planters walked the long walk up to Eagle Rock. As I listened to the details of this story through the years, I could never understand why, if their project was so righteous, they should have pursued it under cover of darkness.

However, when they reached the mountains and saw the number of strong, healthy branches growing in wild profusion, all doubts quickly disappeared. For they saw a definite purpose in the growing of these trees; they were expressly created so their limbs could be cut off to hold up tomato plants.

Putting the gallon of wine tenderly aside, they took off their jackets, rolled up their sleeves and lifted their axes. Until now, the only sounds heard were the pre-dawn rustlings of animal-life, and the restless cries of birds whose world had been rudely disturbed. Boom! The sound reverberated through the silent mountains like thunder, and awoke any wild-life that still slumbered.

"Shhh!" Uncle Angelo, with his fingers to his lips, cautioned Uncle Jim and my father. "Do you want to wake the dead?"

"What are you afraid of?" asked my father. "There isn't anybody around."

"And if there was," said Uncle Jim, "these trees are as much ours as theirs. They belong to the world, and we're part of the world."

"I know . . . I know," whispered Uncle Angelo, who realized that Uncle Jim was simply mouthing the philosophy he had so firmly instilled in him. "Still, this is a new country, and you can never tell what kind of crazy laws they have. Remember, I'm a citizen. If I get in trouble I have rights. But with you, they'll deport you."

"No, they won't," said my father, as he raised his axe. "My children are citizens, so they can't deport me." Boom! Down came the axe, and off came the limb.

Uncle Angelo's eyes almost popped out of his head. "Gently . . . gently . . ." He was afraid to speak above a whisper.

"How can you chop trees gently?" asked my father.

"I'll show you." And Uncle Angelo cautiously, quietly chipped away at a weak limb, while the two regarded him, unbelievingly.

"If you want to stay here till next week," said my father, "all right. But I'm getting back for ten-thirty Mass." Down came the axe, as birds and animals squealed and chirped in outraged frenzy.

"Listen," whispered Uncle Angelo, hoarsely, his eyes wide as saucers.

"What's the matter with you?" said Uncle Jim. "Get to work so you'll have a nice thirst for a glass of wine." *Boom* and *Crash*!

"I thought I heard a motorcycle," said Uncle Angelo, creeping cautiously toward some bushes.

"It's your imagination," said my father, unconcernedly.

The tree-choppers were so engrossed in their work, that of course, by the time they heard it, it was too late. As the two motorcycles approached, they remained frozen to the spot. All the time, Uncle Angelo

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Books for Catholic readers

PUBLISHERS

The Negro slave who captured New York...with a love that was stronger than race

PIERRE TOUSSAINT

A GENTLEMAN OF OLD NEW YORK

By Arthur and Elizabeth Odell Sheehan

"Go to Toussaint," New Yorkers would say. "He will know how to help you." And so the legends grew around this great-souled man, born a slave in Haiti, whose life of charity to all men overcame the barriers of color a century ago, and made him one of the most honored personages in early New York. Here is his unforgettable story.
Coming June 23, $3.50

The story of the beloved missionary whose martyrdom in a Red Korean prison wrought his greatest victory

AMBASSADOR IN CHAINS

By Raymond A. Lane, M.M. The inspiring life of Bishop Patrick J. Byrne, missionary to Japan and Korea, who died in Communist hands in 1950.
Just published, $3.50

THE GOLDEN STRING

By Bede Griffiths, O.S.B. The autobiography of a young British intellectual whose search for the meaning of existence led him at last to the challenge of life in a Benedictine monastery. "Seems to me one of the most remarkable, most hopeful, religious biographies to appear in recent years."
—*N. Y. Times Book Review.* $3.50

BROWNSON READER

Edited, with an introduction, by Alvan S. Ryan. The first representative selection of the writings of Orestes A. Brownson — social reformer, political thinker, literary critic, convert to Catholicism, and one of the most controversial American public figures of the 19th century.
$4.50

WE AND OUR CHILDREN:

Molding the Child in Christian Living

By Mary Reed Newland. The best selling guide to Christian parenthood. A mother of seven shows how parents may solve the problem of starting their children, early in life, on the path of spiritual understanding. "Many parents will welcome a book on child care that derives from the home rather than the clinic."—*N. Y. Times* $3.50

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

rom P. J. Kenedy & Sons

129 YEARS

ABBÉ PIERRE
and the Ragpickers of Emmaus

By Boris Simon. The story of a modern St. Vincent who has warmed the heart of all mankind with his works of love among the poor and rejected of Paris . . . the bearded priest who provided homes for the homeless and awakened the conscience of France.
Illustrated, $3.75

THE ROSARY OF OUR LADY

By Romano Guardini. A great spiritual writer explains the meaning of the Rosary — not only to those who accept it but to those "who may reject it as something foreign." $2.50

THE VIRTUE OF LOVE

Meditations by Paul De Jaegher, s.j. Reflections on the "unitive love" which leads to an actual sense of sharing in Christ's afflictions and pains, as well as in His joys and glories. Useful for private devotions, retreats, and sermons throughout the liturgical year. $3.00

CHRISTIAN MATURITY:
A Program for Escaping Mediocrity

By John Donohue, s.j. How faith contributes to a unified, generous personality and provides the means for the flowering of our finest potentialities . . . in work, art, social relations, and all the enterprises of human life today. $3.50

MAN TAKES A DRINK:
Facts & Principles About Alcohol

By John C. Ford, s.j. A wise and understanding book for people of all faiths that gives the scientific facts about alcohol and the basic spiritual principles concerning its use and abuse. Introduction by Marty Mann. $2.50

The mighty adventure-story of
a Man of God in the Frozen North

BISHOP OF THE WINDS

By Gabriel Breynat

The thrilling autobiography of the heroic "flying bishop" who spent half a century traveling through the perilous Arctic by airplane, dogsled, and canoe — bringing new hope and inspiration to the Indians and Eskimos in their fierce struggle for survival.
Just published, $3.75

1826

AT YOUR BOOKSELLER'S
P. J. KENEDY & SONS, N. Y. 8

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

lay flat on his stomach, one arm around the gallon, not daring to breathe. As the motorcycles left with their Sunday-morning cargo, he peeped out, and caught a glimpse of his brothers-in-law . . . each seated cozily beside a trooper, wearing an odd look of bewildered importance.

I doubt if anyone ever hustled down that mountain as fast as Uncle Angelo, on that brightening Sunday morn. With his axe over his shoulder, and the gallon of wine safely in his other hand, he moved his big body as fast as possible toward our house.

When my mother saw him, standing alone in the doorway, the gallon of wine not even touched, she knew she was in the face of tragedy. She remained calm as he related the unhappy details of the morning, but broke down completely when told that her handsome husband had been taken to police headquarters in a basket. She took a batch of bills from her bosom, and commissioned Uncle Angelo to bring them back at any cost. Then she went hurriedly to Aunt Lina's house, and while they shared their mutual sorrow, their envoy started riding the infrequent trolleys in the direction of Orange.

Needless to say, my father never made ten-thirty Mass.

THE embarrassing details of how Uncle Angelo played hide-and-seek with the questioning police-officer, as to how he knew his brothers-in-law were in trouble if he hadn't been in the act too, are best left unrelated.

With money left over, after the fine had been paid, and a violent hunger beginning to consume him, Uncle Angelo calmly ordered a taxi.

At about three o-clock, a rustle of excitement was heard, as curious neighbors gathered outside our house. The waiting women ran to the window and beheld Uncle Angelo holding the taxi door open for the other two as if they were visiting dignitaries. Nonchalantly paying the driver, with my mother's money, he followed them into the house, looking neither to right nor left.

When the excitement of reunion had died down, Nonna was heard muttering to herself from her rocker by the window.

"What are you saying?" demanded Uncle Angelo, for there was never any love lost between these two. "Anything that is worth saying is worth saying out loud."

"I said," shouted back Nonna, "that if anybody had bothered to consult me, I could have told them this wasn't the day to go. I dreamed of beans last night, and anybody over the age of three knows that means trouble."

Uncle Angelo gave her a long, searching look, and finally tapped the gallon.

THE STAGE

CAT ON A HOT TIN ROOF

AN equivocal power sustains Mr. Tennessee Williams' new play: the dramatist's craft is at its most supple and secure—the work has inescapable audacity and projection, a splendid largeness of imposition; yet the fusion of craft and vision is imperfect, weighted with some heavy, insoluble reticence or deceit, something which (as Eliot wrote of "Hamlet") the author "could not drag to light, contemplate, or manipulate into art." I shall be concerned in this notice not so much with the legerdemain of Mr. Elia Kazan's production—full of a hard, richly-wrought and fluent poetry of actuality, a vision of life arrested at the threshold of fantasy, fixed in time yet extended out of reality into dream—as with the nature of this curious alchemic reversal which inevitably precipitates dross out of an essential gold.

Mr. Williams' plays involve, in a most vexing and intimate way, the problem once defined by Stark Young as that of "scraping back to the design." The early works, with their slight yet audible music, elude the charge, but in the later plays—ambitious statements about personality and suffering and society—one has somehow the insupportable sense that life is being obscurely practiced upon, the substance of feeling being coerced into new and bizarre patterns. Not alone Mr. Williams' emphases nourish this unease, but the gathering awareness of his startling omissions, too. Yet subtly, this consciousness of nullity is modified by the curious presence of an impulse, the burden of some serious concern and intention making itself felt through layers of modish sensibility and gratuitous shock.

"Cat on a Hot Tin Roof" crystallizes this duality. No play within my knowledge shows so consistent an aspiration to complexity and spaciousness of statement, promises so dense an involvement in the stuff of American imagination, yet lacks almost wholly some binding integrity of experience. He has sought, so Mr. Williams tells us, to snare "the true quality of experience in a group of people . . . cloudy, flickering," and in 'mendacity,' the playwright finds his personages at one: this Mississippi delta is fetid with deceit and connivance. But what are the extensions of 'mendacity'? (The word itself, heavy with pretension, plummets leadenly through the play: imagination suffers by being made thus so overt. We should do better to translate the theme into the rather more accessible terms of appearance and reality.) Certainly in the rich subsidiary ambience of the work—the drama of family rivalry—'mendacity' is enforced with a venomous authority, a stinging, almost tactile,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

perception of malice. But the tangled circle of suffering into which Mr. Williams draws us—this desperate wife and her crippled alcoholic husband and gross, cancerous old father-in-law, chewing each their common wounds and spitting out the bloodied flesh in remorseless jets of Southern speech—is lit by no such direct shaft of light. Here we are at the center of Mr. Williams' moral universe: the chiaroscuro is most intricate, the dramatic surface infinitely plastic. Yet out of all these splendid possibilities, the playwright evokes—'a mystery,' and what is more, a *disabling* mystery: not the numinous darkness and aura of human personality, but some wilful and enigmatic presence which stubbornly resists dissolution into the depth and intimacy of shared perception.

I have implied a kind of collusion, whether of playwright and director, or of Mr. Williams and his own imagination. The charge is serious, yet it is one's mastering impression of the play: Maggie the wife, for example, and the salacious old planter Big Daddy, do not impose any constant or adequate point of view, nor is their ambiguity a fruitful one. They are brilliantly seen, but in too special and limited a light: here they serve chiefly to voice again Mr. Williams' lyrical and familiar belief in the charismatic nature of sexual potency. Brick, the alcoholic husband, initially so resonant and promising a figure, visibly recedes in interest; Mr. Williams falters badly with the homosexual motif. Homosexuality as the destructive element is eminently a possible dramatic subject but the theme must be more accurately "placed" in psychological depth: here—as elsewhere in Mr. Williams' work—it is rather what Henry James called adultery in the theater of Sardou: "a mere pigment, a source of dramatic color. . . ."

"To be absorbed, assuredly"—again I quote James—"is the highest tribute we can pay to any picture of life," and it is a tribute which "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof" continuously exacts. One flaw only I find in Mr. Kazan's production: the playing of Ben Gazzara as the alcoholic Brick. Mr. Gazzara has all the coiled energy to suggest an urban, neurotic temperament—mind is in everything he does—yet surely the Southern (and exact) reality of Mr. Williams' character lies in a certain thickness and refusal of intelligence, a florid, instinctual animalism suddenly gone rancid. Otherwise, I shall merely note in conclusion that I have heard a very telling brief proposed for "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof" as a drama of Racinian passion, ineluctably stalking its golden beasts in the jungle of the heart. Would not that, perhaps, more incisively 'scrape back to the design' Mr. Williams has smudged than this production of Mr. Kazan's, however audacious and magisterial its impact, whatever its secure and dominating intensities of art? (*At the Morosco.*)

RICHARD HAYES.

THE SCREEN

FLOWER IN THE CRANNIED WALL

STRANGELY enough this has suddenly become the season of documentaries, or semi-documentaries, I should say, because, although the camera does not lie, its shots are carefully edited to make us see only what the director wants us to see. If ever a movie was well named, it's "The Great Adventure," a Swedish nature film that is indeed a great adventure. Producer-director-writer-photographer-editor Arne Sucksdorff spent two-and-a-half years making and polishing this little gem; and the finished film, brilliant but not too brilliant, is worth all this effort which must have been a labor of love.

Ostensibly "The Great Adventure" is the story of two little boys who adopt an otter cub in the fall and secretly keep him in the barn all winter. Of course, the picture is about many other aspects of nature: its cruelty and beauty, growth and the passing of seasons, the relationships between man and wild life. There are many scenes of the neat Swedish farm where the little boys live and the countryside around it especially the forests where, as the narrator says, "Grief is short-lived, and so is joy."

As in the Disney nature series, with which this picture compares quite favorably, the script has its anthropomorphic touches, but it never goes overboard in its philosophy; and the handsome black-and-white photography, whether concentrating on animal or vegetable is always a delight—especially as the two little boys react to their surroundings. Perhaps it's a sad lesson they learn at the end: "No one can encage a dream alive for long, however kind the keeper"; but that too is part of nature and growing up.

NATURE goes to greater extremes for the show it puts on in "Green Magic," a wonderful Italian documentary made by four men who travelled some 7,800 miles in South America and were ready to stop and oh and ah at every bit of excitement be it man-made or nature-made. Led by Count Leonardo Bonzi, the expedition started out in jeeps in Brazil, made its way into Paraguay and through the jungles of Bolivia and up the Andes into Peru. So much happened during the course of this interesting journey and the film is so well edited that the whole thing consists of a series of highlights most of which are bound to please or frighten someone in the audience. The beauty of the waterfalls of the Iguassu River and the brilliant parrots and butterflies (all handsomely photographed in Ferraniacolor), the terrifying scenes of the piranha fish eating a live heifer right down to the bones while

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

gauchos drive their herds across a river, the disturbing shots of two snakes fighting to the death, the sociological sequences of the weird, trance-like Macumba ritual and later the extraordinary wedding ceremony in the Andes are items not to be missed by the armchair traveler with a strong stomach and an eye for the picturesque. Accompanying all these splendors is a commentary much more literate than most—since it was written by the late James Agee.

DISPLAYING some of the same beauties and terrors is "Naked Amazon," a semi-documentary in color covering the expedition led by Zygmunt Sulstrowski into the Brazilian interior. While the first half of this film, crowded as it is with snakes and crocodiles and other dangers of nature in the raw, has an air of being exaggerated (due mainly to the commentary which is always more panting and hectic than what you see), the second part, when the explorers move in with the Camayura Indian Tribe, takes on an anthropological interest which cannot be dampened by the script. Of course the primitive behavior patterns of these practically nude natives are not for the fastidious, but the customs, dances and rituals found in this culture are fascinating. The quick jump after the Camayura scenes to a riotous Mardi Gras Carnival in Rio is the film's most effective pictorial comment.

IF you're still feeling strong after these excursions into South America, you can take a really shocking trip to Japan that will knock you right out of your seat. "Hiroshima" spares you none of the details as to what August 6, 1945 was like in that ill-fated place. This Japanese film, directed by Hideo Sekigawa in a long-suffering manner that makes any of cataclysmic Hollywood pictures seem pretty pale, has a slight story that follows one family after the A-bomb did its damage and then concentrates on a younger son some seven years later when he has become a Japanese version of a juvenile delinquent—and with cause. This epic drama (said to be one of the biggest movies ever made in Japan and costing 100,000,000 yen) is a curious mixture of good and bad film making with scene after scene of destruction and terror complete with writhing bodies and burnt corpses. "Hiroshima" is the kind of foreign film that should be recommended —because its propaganda is directed not against Americans but against war; however, one is reluctant to suggest that any audience except the war mongers be subjected to all these reels of detailed suffering.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

Just published

FRANCIS THOMPSON AND OTHER ESSAYS

Vincent McNabb, O.P.

This collection of sixteen articles and essays was originally published to mark Rev. Vincent McNabb's Golden Jubilee in the Order of Preachers, which took place on 28th November 1935. Republished twenty years later, and twelve years after Father Vincent's death, they are a pleasant introduction to the rich variety of the writings of this great priest.

65 cents

BLACKFRIARS PUBLICATIONS

34 BLOOMSBURY STREET, LONDON, W C. 1

LEWIS COLLEGE

Of SCIENCE and TECHNOLOGY

Lockport, Illinois

CO-EDUCATIONAL

A Catholic college administered and staffed by Catholic laymen. CYO affiliated. State and University accredited. Majors offered in Liberal Arts, Natural Sciences, Business Administration, Social Sciences, Industrial Arts, Engineering. B.A., B.S. degrees. One and two year courses in Flight, including Helicopter, Aviation Operations, Maintenance, 35 miles from Chicago.

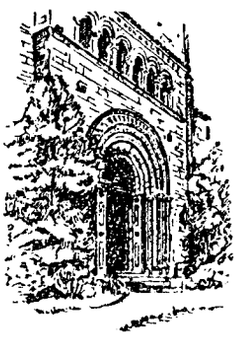
CHESTNUT HILL COLLEGE

Chestnut Hill
Pennsylvania

Conducted by the Sisters of St. Joseph

Approved by the Association of American Universities.

For further information write to the Registrar.



Prospective students should make early application

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

TWO IMAGES OF ONE MAN

MANY Americans held exaggerated notions about Senator McCarthy's strength among Catholics. It was great enough, considerably greater than among other religious groups, but McCarthy never achieved the sweeping Catholic acceptance that he was often credited with. True, some powerful Catholic spokesmen and publications seemed to go all out in support, but a few others opposed the McCarthy influence at least as vigorously as it was fought anywhere else. The greater number of Catholic publications actually seemed to follow a hands-off policy.

But for all that, McCarthy undoubtedly counted heavily on the support he received from Catholic admirers. It was really a source of wonder to many non-Catholics when an anti-McCarthy Catholic was upturned. He was welcomed to the club, but the general feeling was that such a maverick must be the kind of Catholic who eats meat on Friday. In many Catholic groups too, the anti-McCarthy Catholic was regarded with mystification, if not suspicion. Finally, thanks to the Bishop in Chicago, the point was put over that Catholics were legitimately divided on the question. But I think the suspicion still lingers in both groups that the kind of Catholic who would oppose McCarthy is a queer duck.

McCarthy, the public figure, fits a commonly held image of the American Catholic as a man with only a surface commitment to democratic institutions. For a goodly number of people McCarthyism brilliantly exemplified what they call the "Catholic problem." The Senator was offered as a kind of walking illustration for the Blanshard thesis.

Among Catholics themselves there was a great deal of pride in McCarthy and another kind of identification. McCarthy illustrated the flattering group-image of the American Catholic as a hard-fighting, two-fisted patriot, the scourge of America's enemies, the guardian of national security and standard-bearer for American (read anti-Communist) ideals.

I am not sure just what Catholic affinity for Senator McCarthy's cause proved. Perhaps it demonstrated that Catholics were more anti-Communist than other people, less inclined toward "softness." That, I suppose, is the feeling in McCarthyist Catholic circles. Others would have it that Catholics, believing in absolutes, were untouched by the dangerously "liberal" philosophy which put obstacles in McCarthy's way. I suspect that the good old tribal spirit had something to do with it. Also, one can not forget that many of these same Catholic groups had long been pointing out the danger of Communism. McCarthy's success seemed to vindicate the years they spent talking into a dead microphone. No wonder they turned him into a hero.

But while this might make McCarthy's success among Catholics more understandable, it is not much of a consolation to those who wonder about Catholic devotion to the democratic methods and procedures which McCarthy flouted.

I think the simple fact of the matter is that until recently Catholics have not, generally speaking, very seriously considered the whole question of civil liberties. The very words in many Catholic circles are alien-sounding and suspect—perhaps vaguely "communistic." They seem to have nothing to do with "Americanism," although traditional civil liberties and democratic freedoms are perhaps at the very core of whatever real meaning "Americanism" has.

In Catholic schools, there has been so much emphasis on the central philosophic problems of political science that the more immediate questions of civil liberties seem to have been largely neglected. So much energy has been expended on abstract questions like the exact ideal relationship between Church and State in an ideal, improbable state that the actual conditions of American life may have been slighted. Judging from many editorials in the Catholic press whenever questions of civil liberties arise—heavily text-bookish and abstractly philosophic as they are—the subject is rarely even considered seriously. The points made in the average editorial might have had a terrible pertinence in thirteenth-century Florence or Pisa. Generally, though, they seem as remote from American realities as the medieval sources from which they are cribbed.

It took some time for the larger body of Catholics to absorb the social doctrines of the encyclicals. But in the last twenty years remarkable progress has been made. Now even McCarthy-supporting magazines are very advanced on social questions—including the once explosive interracial question. It is no longer "radical" to speak out on the race question or to support labor unions. Monsignor John A. Ryan and other pioneers would undoubtedly be surprised by the reception their ideas now get, though they were bitterly denounced as upstarts and troublemakers in their own day, not so long ago.

One happy result of the McCarthy controversy in Catholic circles may be that attention will be turned to the whole matter of civil liberties, now that the issue has been so clearly dramatized. Perhaps in a few years there will be a wider understanding of such matters. The question will be treated more seriously and knowledgeably. "Civil liberties" will no longer be among the dirty words.

In the days when American Catholics were widely persecuted, great emphasis was put on civil liberties. Some of the early bishops spoke as eloquently and movingly on these democratic rights and procedures as any men in the nation's history. A Catholic body as alert to democratic methods as they were would have spotted McCarthy early in the game.

JOHN COGLEY.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Presuppositions of Democracy

WILL HERBERG

THE growing concern of the democratic world with the moral foundations of democracy is doubly significant. For one thing, it reflects the fact that our democracy has become problematic, no longer able to rest in the simple self-assurance of its rightness without explicit justification in more fundamental terms. These terms, moreover, in which democracy now seeks to justify itself are not the "scientific" and pragmatic categories supposed to be native to the American mind. Rather are they terms of moral, even metaphysical reference, suggesting that we are again coming to see democracy and the basic problem of politics in the broad perspective that characterizes the main stream of Western political thought. We may well be witnessing the beginnings of a genuine renewal of political philosophy.

John H. Hallowell, of Duke University, has contributed to this reorientation of thought probably as much as any man now writing in this country. His *Decline of Liberalism as an Ideology* and his *Main Currents in Modern Political Thought* struck a new note in American political thinking, and demonstrated with erudition and insight how an understanding of our political heritage might acquire new dimensions when approached from a sophisticated philosophical standpoint. In his new book, *The Moral Foundation of Democracy* [Chicago, $3.50], containing the Walgreen Lectures for 1952, Mr. Hallowell attempts to make explicit his philosophy of politics, both in criticism and in constructive presentation. The result is most impressive, and deserves careful study and analysis.

THE first two chapters of this slim volume are given over to a devastating critique of irrationalism in politics. As against Pareto—with whom, for purposes of the argument, are grouped Marx, Sorel, and Freud—Mr. Hallowell insists that the deep irrational drives in human behavior cannot be made to prove the radical and essential irrationality of human nature, since if men were indeed *radically* and *essentially* irrational, "why should [they] feel any necessity at all for 'rationalizing' their behavior, for providing 'good' reasons for 'real' ones?. . . . [Indeed] how is it *possible* for them to do so?" Man is much more complex than the irrationalists imagine; he is divided within and against himself in a much more profound way than the mere distinction between the unconscious and the conscious, "residues" and "derivations," "real" interests and ideologies, would suggest—yet for all his inner division and self-conflict, the essential rationality and normativity of his being is not destroyed. He retains a capacity for reason and justice which makes genuine political life possible.

Mr. Hallowell uses the half-forgotten writings of Thurman Arnold to illustrate what the irrationalist philosophy leads to on a level of politics. Since he holds men to be irrational beings moved and motivated by unconscious forces, Mr. Arnold concludes that "from a humanitarian point of view, the best government is that which we find in an insane asylum," in which an "alienist" treats his "patients" in strictly pragmatic, non-moral terms. Mr. Hallowell has no difficulty in showing that this view of political life leads directly to the horrors of *Brave New World* and *1984,* in which a "scientific" élite manipulates the mass of mankind in the interests of a stable and happy society. Totalitarianism run mad is the inescapable outcome of this philosophy which models the governance of men upon the regime of an insane asylum.

With T. V. Smith, the third of Mr. Hallowell's targets, the dispute is over the nature of democracy. Smith insists that democratic politics is simply "the institutionalized art of compromise" of conflicting interests, and that it is both meaningless and dangerous to try to evaluate interests in terms of legitimacy or worth. Here, too, Mr. Hallowell has no difficulty in showing that while compromise is, of course, a pervasive feature of democratic politics, it is possible and desirable only within the limits of the common assumptions and presuppositions that form the underlying consensus of democratic society. To define compromise as the "essence" of democracy, without taking into account what it is that makes compromise possible, and therefore also what it is that sets limits to its scope, is to drain democracy of its meaning and make impossible both its understanding and validation.

What is this consensus, what are these common assumptions and presuppositions of democracy? Are they essentially procedural, or do they involve something substantive as well? And do not procedural assumptions themselves point to substantive commitments behind them? Mr. Hallowell does not explicitly

Mr. Herberg, author of *Judaism and Modern Man,* is a frequent contributor to The Commonweal and other magazines.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

discuss these questions, at least not at this point, but his own definition of democracy has its implications. In his third chapter, he defines democracy as "first of all, government by persuasion and deliberation," and then proceeds to derive from this conception the familiar institutional framework of democracy—civil liberties, a popularly elected legislative assembly, a responsible party system and effective political leadership, the whole structure of constitutionalism.

Against F. R. Bentley and the school of political scientists who insist on interpreting politics exclusively in terms of group pressures reflecting group interests, Mr. Hallowell resorts to essentially the same line of argument that he employed against Pareto and the political irrationalists: if men could never in any way transcend their self-interest, individual and corporate, political society would quite literally be impossible, for no common ground of political existence could be found or long maintained. Men can and do transcend narrow self-interest in a vision of a higher justice and the common good; they do "intend the public good," as Alexander Hamilton himself pointed out.

Thus far Mr. Hallowell is on sure ground. But it seems to me that he does not take sufficiently into account the insidious involutions of self-interest, which knows how to insinuate itself again into every level of self-transcendence of which men are capable. The "public good" we "intend" we after all see from the standpoint of our particularity and self-interest, which is never quite the standpoint of the other fellow; a "standpointless" position is impossible for man. To ignore this hard but inexpugnable fact of human existence is to open the door wide to the dreadful perils of political self-righteousness and utopian idealism. Nothing is more dangerous than the self-assured idealist, unshakable in the confidence that he has finally transcended all self-interest so that he knows for certain and unequivocally represents the common interests of mankind. There is a chastening truth in the "interest-group" school of thought which a too simple rationalism runs the risk of obscuring and losing.

Mr. Hallowell is at his best in his account of the dissolution of liberalism, to which the fourth chapter is devoted. Summarizing the argument of his earlier work, he points out that liberals have tried to combine two inconsistent principles, the relatively new concept that "law is the product of individual wills and subjective interests" and the more traditional teaching that "law is the embodiment of eternal truths and values discoverable by reason." The latter principle was supposed to, and for a time did, hold in check the disruptive forces inherent in the former. But with the advancing secularization of liberal thought, the notion of a "higher law" binding on man but beyond his control was lost; liberalism degenerated into unmitigated pragmatism and legal positivism, in which might, provided only it were successful and effective, was quite literally identified with right. Despite this devastating analysis, Mr. Hallowell apparently remains a liberal, hoping, it seems, to save liberalism from itself and restore it to its ancient glory.

THE really fundamental questions are raised in the last two chapters, and here it is that one finds most to disagree with the author. In his discussion of "Human Nature and Politics," to which the fifth chapter is devoted, Mr. Hallowell affirms first what is surely basic to any serious political philosophy—that "underlying every system of government, there is some predominant conception of the nature of man and the meaning of human existence"—and then proceeds to confront two alternative conceptions with each other: the Aristotelian view that "the state arises out of natural necessity and continues in existence in order that men might be helped by its institutions to realize their inherent potentialities as persons" and the pragmatist-positivist view that "the state is an instrumentality of the human will to be used in any fashion which those in control of the state deem desirable." "Translated into political terms," Mr. Hallowell declares, "the issue is this: . . . . is there something inherent in human nature which demands the state and defines and limits its function, or is the state simply a conventional and arbitrary instrument of the human will?"

But are these positions, stated in their extreme form, the only alternatives available? Is there not, as distinct from both political rationalism and political positivism, the Augustinian view, long prevalent in Western thought, according to which the State is not so much a necessity of man's "essential" nature in the order of creation, as it is an institution that emerges to preserve society and community from the disruptive consequences of the sinful egocentricity which characterizes man's "fallen" nature in the historical order? In this conception, which is very far from being negative, the State is not identified with society or community, as it tends to be in the Aristotelian view, nor is it simply a human contrivance subject to the most arbitrary manipulation, as it is in the liberal-positivist philosophy. In this conception, both the objectivity and the historicity of the State are preserved in a way that does justice to the complex reality of the human situation.

Mr. Hallowell tries hard to escape the pitfalls of Greek rationalism, but it cannot be said that he quite succeeds; he fails, it seems to me, because he does not take the fact of sin, the Biblical understanding of man's "fallen" state, seriously enough. Defining his

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

basic philosophy in the early pages of this book, Mr. Hallowell does not hesitate to state: "The world we live in is an orderly universe—a cosmos, not a chaos." This is, of course, the kind of world that came from the hand of God in creation, but has Mr. Hallowell forgotten the Jewish-Christian teaching that the world of God's creation has been *disordered* by the primal alienation from God which we know as sin? It is this disordered world, this "fallen" world, this *cosmos in chaos,* that is the world in which we live and work in the historical order, and it is the first counsel of realism to recognize this. A philosophy of politics based on a view that sees man and the world still in the primal harmony of an unmarred creation is quite obviously going to prove inadequate when it comes face to face with the realities of human existence and social life.

In his final chapter, Mr. Hallowell proceeds to erect democracy on what is essentially a liberal view of man —on man's rationality and goodness, on his innate dignity, intelligence, self-discipline, and natural inclination to the right. Mr. Hallowell appears uneasy with this rather enthusiastic picture, and attempts some mitigation, but the picture is not thereby modified to any appreciable extent. He stresses, and stresses quite rightly, that it is "man's capacity for justice" which "makes democracy possible", but he makes little of, though he quotes, the other half of this celebrated Niebuhrian maxim: it is "man's inclination to injustice" which "makes democracy necessary."

Here we have the crux of the matter. How is democracy to be justified? Mr. Hallowell rests essentially on the Aristotelian premise: "the many, of whom each individual is but an ordinary person, when they meet together may very likely be better than the few good, if regarded not individually but collectively. . . . For each individual among the many has a share of virtue and prudence, and when they meet together, they become in a manner one man. . . . Hence the many are better judges than a single man . . . for some understand one part, and some another, and among them they understand the whole." As against this view —dubious enough on many counts, but particularly in its inability to grasp what is implied in the distinction, "Moral Man and Immoral Society"—we have another interpretation of democracy, closer to our own political tradition. A little over a hundred years ago, on October 16, 1854, in his reply to Senator Stephen A. Douglas in Peoria, Illinois, Abraham Lincoln formulated this insight in a most striking way:

> Judge Douglas [said Lincoln], frequently and with bitter irony, paraphrases our argument by saying: "The white people of Nebraska are good enough to govern themselves, but they are not good enough to govern a few miserable Negroes!" Well, I doubt not that the people of Nebraska are and will continue to be as good as the average people elsewhere. I do not say to the contrary. What I do say is that *no man is good enough to govern another without that other's consent.* I say this is the sheet-anchor, the leading principle, of American republicanism (emphasis added).

What Lincoln here calls "American republicanism" we today call American democracy. The "leading principle," the "sheet-anchor," remain the same, and it is a far cry indeed from the simple notion that the inadequacies of human wisdom and virtue are overcome when individuals "meet together" in some corporate entity.

IN the last analysis, the moral foundation of democracy consists of two convictions: (1) the conviction that beyond all earthly majesties, even the majesty of society and the State, there is a higher majesty and a higher law; and (2) the conviction that no man, or group of men, no matter how good or wise they may be, possess the wisdom or virtue to be entrusted with unrestricted and irresponsible power over others. It is these two convictions that are reflected in the built-in mechanisms of self-limitation, self-criticism, and self-reform that characterize the institutional framework of democracy as we know it. It is these two convictions that provide the basic distinction between the authentic democracy of the constitutional state and the pseudo-democracy of the plebiscitary mass-state. It is these two convictions, together with a proper understanding of man's social nature and his "capacity for justice", that seem to me to constitute the moral foundation of democracy.

Much of what I have said is explicit, more is implicit, in Mr. Hallowell's argument. But it is almost everywhere overlaid and obscured by a strong rationalism derived from Greek sources. Mr. Hallowell would have done his own cause, and perhaps even his own argument, better service had he been more concerned to separate out the Jewish-Christian from the Greek elements in his political philosophy, for in the last analysis they say different things and lead in different directions.

For $5 you can give over 50 lbs. of local foods to

an exiled Vietnam family

You can have the food delivered within two weeks to the poorest of these families through the Vietnam Adopt-a-Family program. Accompanying each food package are these words in Vietnamese script: "An American family extends this gift to you with prayers for God's blessing on you and your family."

Send your Vietnam contribution to War Relief Services
National Catholic Welfare Conference
350 Fifth Avenue, New York 1, N.Y.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Discovery of a Poetic War Novel

THE NIGHT OF TIME. By Rene Fülop-Miller. Translated by Richard and Clara Winston. Bobbs-Merrill. $3.75.

By JOHN F. SULLIVAN

THE world's great novels about war—beginning, perhaps, with *War and Peace,* but certainly since *The Red Badge of Courage*—have been almost without exception starkly realistic. Partly this has been due to the circumstance that realism and naturalism have been dominant modes in the novel generally, during the same period in which the world has experienced the slaughter-house horrors of modern warfare. But it is likely that realism or naturalism would have dominated the war novel in any event, through a widespread feeling that only these modes could adequately convey the enormous shock of such horrors.

Possibly the greatest virtue, then, of Rene Fülöp-Miller's novel, *The Night of Time,* is that it demonstrates the immense superiority of the poetic over the realistic mode, even for the theme of war. It is superior, I think, because realism's inductive technique, endlessly amassing particular detail, is incapable of the leap to universality that is the distinction of poetry.

The extraordinary power of poetry derives, in fact, from its ability to reveal the universal through the particular. The singularity of *The Night of Time* is all the more notable because the particular story it tells is the very same story which has been recounted in many of the conventionally realistic war novels —the story of an expendable battalion holding a nameless hill. But this stereotyped framework has been clothed by Fülöp-Miller in such flesh of poetry that it has power to move and penetrate far in excess of anything the realistic versions of it can boast.

As befits an essentially poetic achievement, the most effective elements of this novel are what may best be described as images—new and wry and poetic ways of seeing truth. For example, the narrative of the march to Hill 317 slowly dissolves from an expert but typical enough rendering of the hardships of marching in bad weather to a nightmare view of the universe as an enormous mudhole, inexorably swallowing helpless lemming-men.

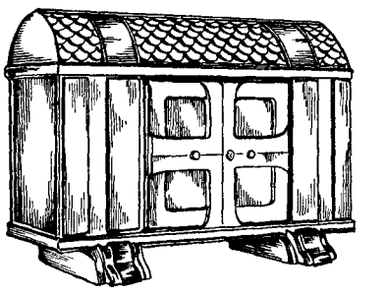
More satirical in form is the section called "The Field Telephone," which cannot be reduced to so explicit an image. It conveys, nevertheless, the basically poetic discovery that the protocol of modern communication systems is hugely, almost grotesquely comic.

The central image of the book is drawn, like the title, from the suggestion of a passage in Sir Thomas Browne's *Urn Burial.* It is the image of an "underground" army, the army of the buried dead, whose recruiting officer above ground is a fantastic "Gravedigger Captain," commander of the battalion's burial squad. Like Adam Ember, the hero of the novel, we struggle against the grimness of this fantasy, which his Captain seeks to impose on him, but, like Adam, we find that it is deeply insidious, perhaps in the end inescapable.

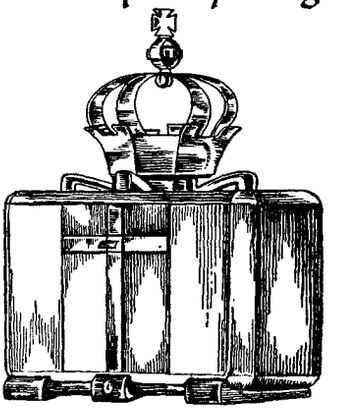
In the excitment of discovering a truly poetic war novel, it is easy to overlook its faults of execution, faults which grow, certainly, out of the author's desperate sense of urgency, a compulsion that makes him triply underscore his message. His hero's name, for example, is composed of *Adam* and the Hungarian word for *man,* and his soldiers are given names ranging from O'Connor to Chiu, typical of all the nations of the earth. The universality of poetry is not to be achieved by devices like these, and fortunately in this novel it is otherwise established.

Perhaps there is a flaw, too, in the final section of *The Night of Time,* where, like Milton in the midst of "Lycidas," Fülöp-Miller explodes right out of the poetic

MONTEREY GUILD TABERNACLES
Designed by Charlton Fortune



These tabernacles, because of their unique shape, are adapted to altars of contemporary design.



They are made of heavy polished brass and executed by skilled craftsmen. A brochure is available on request.

The Monterey Guild
Portsmouth Priory, Portsmouth, Rhode Island

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

3rd Annual LITURGICAL MUSIC Workshop

"The Choirmaster's Workshop"

August 15-26, 1955
Boys Town, Nebraska

James Welch
Dom Ermin Vitry
Dr. Eugene Selhorst
Rev. Francis Brunner
William Ripley Dorr
Rev. Francis Schmitt
Claire Coci

For further information, please write:

Music Department
BOYS TOWN, NEBRASKA

Classified

★RATES, payable in advance: 16⅔c a word (6 words, $1). Centered lines $1 each. 12 words or 2 lines minimum. Discounts: 5% for 3 times, 10% for 7 times, 15% for 13 times.

IRISH BOOKS AND GIFTS

★ Books, Linens, Gifts, *Catalogs.*
IRISH INDUSTRIES DEPOT INC.
870 Lexington Ave. (near 65th), New York

CHESTERTON AND BELLOC

★Chesterton and Belloc Books
200 titles. Free Catalogue.
Andrew Prosser, 3118 N. Keating Ave.
Chicago 41, Illinois

GREETING CARDS

★Ideal gifts or greetings for Ordination, Graduation. Patron Saints of Professions, Madonna notes (20 subjects). Box of 10 asst. any series, $1.60 postpaid. No C.O.D.'s. Serrana, Box 411, Santa Barbara, Calif.

PRINTED LABELS

★ 500 Gummed Labels, printed 3 lines, $1. HERDMAN, 520 Belleville Ave., Belleville, N. J.

TEACHING POSITION WANTED

★Philosophy—Psychology professor, M.A., 6 yrs. college experience, 2 yrs. foreign study, desires position. Excellent references. Box 513, THE COMMONWEAL.

mode into the rhetorical, explicitly naming and denouncing the perpetrators of evil. But if this is a fault, it pales, as in "Lycidas," beside the sheer grandeur of the whole. For the last section of *The Night of Time* is nothing less than a modern interpretation of the Apocalypse, a vision of the end of the world in a thermonuclear-chemical-bacteriological holocaust. No one for whom Christianity has any meaning can possibly come away from these final pages unconvinced of the figurative, if not the literal truth of this revelation. But Christian and non-Christian alike will be harrowed by the extremity of its terror.

History's Course

CHANCE OR DESTINY. By Oscar Handlin. Atlantic-Little, Brown. $3.75.

By JOHN COURNOS

THE Greeks said: "Character is fate." They also, with good reason, entertained the notion that their gods now and again took an unfair whack at their innocent victims. It is only too obvious that the second circumstance impinges on the first. Prof. Oscar Handlin, Pulitzer Prize winner of History for 1952, clearly finds himself in a somewhat analogous situation in his attempt to determine in what degree destiny, and in what degree chance, has governed the expansion of these United States and made the nation a world power in our time second to none.

Is there such a thing as a law of history, a law which could be counted upon to adumbrate and determine the course of future history on the basis of the past? There have been reputable historians, Prof. Handlin assures us, who have recognized such a law. He himself is a bit shaky about it. More than in destiny he appears to have faith in lucky accidents, in those unpredictable chance occurrences which play tricks on nations and, for better or worse, change history's course, sometimes with grave and untold consequences.

The sub-title of the book, "Turning Points in American History," should be accepted with caution, if the careless reader is not to get the impression that this country itself was something of an accident. "Prince Bismarck" (the quotation is the author's) "once concluded that there was a special providence for drunkards, fools, and the United States." And, indeed, comments the author, "from the point of view of the experienced American statesman or the professional soldier there was much to be said for the argument that America had grown strong by a miraculous streak of luck that, at one turning point after another, directed fortune its way."

Now this is over-simplification with a vengeance, and with reason it may be asked if it is not the ability to turn a turning point to full advantage rather than good luck that testifies to the quality and character of people. Americans, from the point of view of history, *knew* how to make the most of a given situation, Bismarck notwithstanding. To say that the bad luck of the British at Yorktown, including an unexpected storm which prevented Cornwallis's escape, had given us victory and independence, is by no means the whole truth; for in a later essay Professor Handlin admits that the historian can begin to understand the zigzags of history "only when he perceives that it is a line made up of a succession of points, with every point a turning point." And one may ask: is it not in this, after all, that a people's character is the operating factor of history?

In South Africa

THE GOVERNOR'S WIFE. By David Unwin. Dutton. $3.

By JAMES D. FINN

ALTHOUGH this is David Unwin's first novel, *The Governor's Wife* reveals a writer who is sure in his craft. He plunges us into the action and maintains it at an ever-increasing pace, sketches characters economically, writes con-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

vincing dialogue, and evokes an almost palpable atmosphere with his description. And his novel has the elementary virtue without which other virtues are as straw: it is interesting.

The story is narrated by Sebastian Pole, a young Englishman who has been sent to South Africa to report on an irrigation project for the Nwambe Desert. The project is the colonial Governor's pet, but Sebastian realizes, almost as soon as he arrives in the Protectorate of Bandaland, that only a few support the Governor. He is strongly opposed by his own officials, the white civilians, and the distrustful Africans who feel that they have chafed too long under the constraint of the white man. Nor does the neighboring "white" Republic of Equatoria approve the scheme. But the opposition is unified by no common motive. Distrust, fear, loyalty, and courage bring them together. They are led to agree upon a particular issue because they differ on those which are much larger—the future of Africa; the nature of democracy; the relation of white man to African, of man to man.

Sebastian desires to judge impartially and fairly, but the middle ground that would have served as a vantage point is nowhere to be seen. "These are critical years," he is immediately told. "Whose side are you on?" So persistent is the question, so many forms does it assume, that in the most innocent situation, when he is casually asked how he likes his coffee, "White or black?" the question seems heavy with meaning. Sebastian attempts to thread his way through the complexities of his assignment, but his task is further complicated by the unexpected personal relations he develops with those whom he encounters: with "Sneezer," an old classmate to whose weakness Africa has pandered; with blond Pat Jensen, a native Equatorian who detests his acceptance of the African but comes to love him; with the Governor's wife, for whom he feels a love he does not profess; with Mr. Mero, the African who makes a legend of Sebastian because Sebastian has treated him as a man. And he is successful in his attempt, but only to an extent, for no clear-cut outcome is possible.

Against the background of present-day Africa, Mr. Unwin has displayed once again the difficulties of acting responsibly within the cramping limitations of a concrete situation where no discernible alternative is wholly desirable, where half-blind hope must serve for knowledge, where one's own motives becomes mixed and murky. But he has not made of his novel a thesis. One feels that he has been true to the conditions as they exist. Mr. Unwin's writing is clear and forceful, and *The Governor's Wife* is more than a merely competent performance.

Schools

NEW JERSEY

Delbarton School

Morristown, New Jersey. An hour's drive from the George Washington Bridge or Holland Tunnel. A country day and boarding school for boys conducted by Benedictine Monks. Six forms, comprising the 7th and 8th grades and four years of college preparatory courses. Small classes. Thorough guidance department. Complete athletic program. Write for prospectus to the Headmaster.

RHODE ISLAND

Portsmouth Priory School

Portsmouth, Rhode Island, 23 miles from Providence, 8 miles from Newport, on inland waters of Narragansett Bay. Conducted by American Monks of the English Benedictine Congregation, assisted by Lay Masters. Five forms, 8th grade and four years of high school. Standard Preparatory Course for all colleges and technical schools. Added opportunities in Mathematics and Languages. College Board Examination. Full facilities for athletics including sailing. Address the Secretary.

REVIEWERS

John F. Sullivan is a member of the department of English at the University of Detroit.

John Cournos is a well-known critic, anthologist, and student of Americana.

James D. Finn is an associate editor of the *Chicago Review*.

Colleges

NEW JERSEY

Caldwell College

Caldwell, New Jersey. A four year liberal arts college conducted by the Sisters of Saint Dominic. Accredited by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools. Liberal Arts, Sciences, Business, Teacher Training, Library Science, Music. Tuition $350, Board $550. Degrees: B.A., B.S., A.A. Catalogue: The Registrar, Caldwell N. J.

INDIANA

Saint Mary's College Notre Dame

Conducted by Sisters of the Holy Cross. Fully accredited Liberal Arts College for Women. Courses leading to degrees of Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Music, Bachelor of Science, Academic and professional courses in Nursing, Graduate Department of Sacred Theology. Address: Box 71, Saint Mary's College, Notre Dame, Indiana.

ALABAMA

Sacred Heart Junior College

For Women. Conducted by the Sisters of Saint Benedict. Only Catholic college for women in Alabama. Regular courses in arts and sciences, secretarial training, home economics, leading to the A.A. degree and preparatory to the B.A. and B.S. degrees. Combines the recreational facilities of the suburban area with the educational and cultural advantages of Birmingham and Nashville. For further information address the Dean. Cullman, Alabama.

Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College Campus tradition of charm and friendliness since 1840. An accredited college; B.A., B.S., B.F.A. degrees. Music, art, secretarial training, journalism, home economics, teaching, speech and radio. Interesting cultural, athletic, social programs. Well-equipped buildings. Catalog.
BOX 105, SAINT MARY-OF-THE-WOODS, INDIANA

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

In changing subscription addresses, please give three weeks notice before first issue wanted at new address, and state both old and new address.

Circulation Department
The Commonweal

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Christian Democracy

The basic principles of today's various Christian Democratic parties come largely from the Popular Party founded in Italy by Don Luigi Sturzo some forty years ago. With the seizure of power by Fascism, his activities were suppressed, and Don Sturzo himself was exiled as a result of the Duce's concordat with the Vatican.

After World War II, however, Christian Democrats came to the fore in a number of European countries. DeGasperi led an alliance of forces against the Italian Communists; in France the MRP was born of the heroic anti-Nazi Resistance; in Germany the Christian Democrats of Dr. Adenauer followed still a third — if related — pattern. Both French and Italian versions are today seriously split, while Dr. Adenauer and his allies remain firmly in power.

There are no Christian Democrats as such in the United States. Yet there are many Americans who believe that religion flourishes best in a full-fledged political democracy such as ours and that Christian social and political principles should make for enlightened and conscientious citizens. This point of view is consistently reflected in the pages of The Commonweal.

Why not send for a trial subscription?

SPECIAL TRIAL OFFER

NOT FOR CURRENT RENEWALS

THE COMMONWEAL, 386 Fourth Ave., New York 16, N. Y.

Enclosed is $2.00. Please send the next 15 issues of The Commonweal to:

Name .....

Address .....

City .....

6/3/55

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED